

What follows represents the unedited lecture notes of Pastor Merritt's teaching of The Book of The Revelation. Please feel free to reproduce all or part for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Last week I completed the analysis of Revelation Chapter Sixteen and when time expired we were ready to begin an exegesis of Revelation Chapter Seventeen.
2. Before continuing our study, I want to provide "1Jo 1:9 time" as may be necessary.
3. Let's first take a look at an expanded translation of Rev 16:16-21.

Expanded Translation

Rev 16:16 Then the kings assembled their armies to the place which is called in the Hebrew Armageddon.

Rev 16:17 The 7th angel peeled off and poured his bowl into the air above the earth; from the throne located in the Holy of Holies came a loud voice saying "It is done!"

Rev 16:18 Then I saw flashes of lightning and heard great peals of thunder; a severe earthquake shook the planet. No earthquake like it had ever occurred, so tremendous was the damage.

Rev 16:19 Jerusalem was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Rome turning His special wrath upon her.

Rev 16:20 The islands and mountains completely disappeared.

Rev 16:21 Huge hailstones weighing approximately one hundred pounds fell from the heavens. The people of mankind cursed God on account of the hail storm and the other vial judgments.

4. Chronologically the next event is that prophesied in Rev 19:11-19 where Christ Himself descends from heaven to take over His Earthly Kingdom.
5. Though from the contemporary point of view all the details of these dramatic judgments are not immediately understood, the unmistakable impression of the Scriptures is that the whole world is being brought to the bar of justice before Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.
6. There is no escape from divine judgment except for those who avail themselves of the grace of God by faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. The utter perversity of human nature, which will reject the sovereignty of God in the face of such overwhelming evidence, confirms that even the lake of fire will not produce repentance on the part of those who have hardened their hearts against the grace of God.

8. God does not force anybody to believe. There are consequences for faith, and there are consequences for unbelief. When God provides opportunity and the question is asked, it is our duty as Christians to warn people that there is a choice.

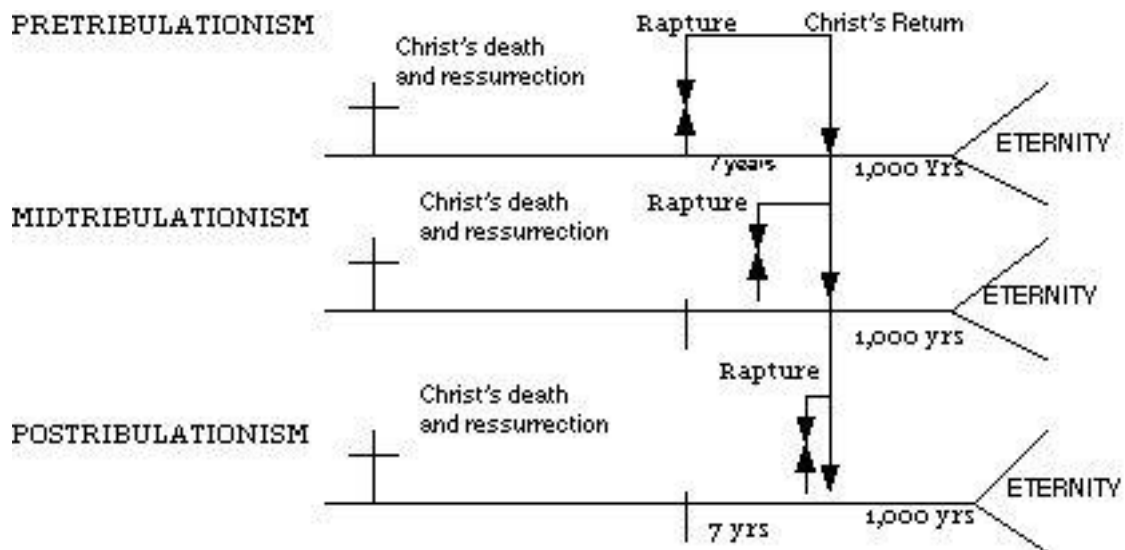
9. First we must know of the long road to Armageddon. Just as there is the road to Armageddon, there is a road to Glory.

10. The promise that Christ is going to come is part of the good news, the gospel. The prophecies of the Bible, particularly the Rapture of the church is a very important doctrine, but we have to face the fact that most in the world do not believe in this wonderful promise.

11. It is interesting, however, whenever there is a crisis, the world suddenly becomes aware of the fact that there are prophecies in the Bible. People may not agree but there's always that sneaking suspicion that possibly the eschatological predictions of the Bible are true.

12. It is also interesting to me, and somewhat surprising, that when the 911 attack occurred, people began asking about Armageddon? Such questions pervade: "Do you think this is the end of the world? Is this a precursor of the Second Coming of Christ?"

13. Sadly most of those asking are church going "Christians" who know next to nothing about prophecy. Let's review our position with reference to the Second Coming of Christ. Nothing can happen until the Rapture and the translation of the Church.



14. Now we are ready for a study of Revelation chapter seventeen.

Introduction

1. Tim LaHaye has written of this chapter on page 260 of his book *Revelation Unveiled*:

"Archaeologists tell us that Babylon is the cradle of civilization on the shores of the Euphrates River, the ruins of this city have some of the most ancient documents of past generations. This city established by Nimrod, who was a rebel before the Lord, authored some of the greatest evils ever to fall on humankind. Two of these evils will be destroyed during the Tribulation period, according to Revelation chapters 17 and 18"

In Chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation the student must keep in mind Rome as a world religion is destroyed by the head of the Roman Empire in the middle of the Tribulation. It is then the Antichrist moves his operation to the Shinar plain and ancient Babylon.

2. These great evils, which have damned the souls of millions by substituting counterfeit solutions to natural human problems that would ordinarily lead a person to God, will all be destroyed at the end of the Tribulation period.

3. Chapters 17 and 18 of The Book of The Revelation are dedicated to the description of the final destruction of Rome/Babylon as first the center of world religion and then Rome/Babylon as the center of international commerce and politics.

4. Neither chapter seventeen nor eighteen advance the narrative; these chapters are simply detailed descriptions of Rome first in its ecclesiastical form and then in its political form.

5. It is evident from these chapters that the events described, especially those in chapter 17, precede by some considerable period the events represented in the seven vials. The events described in Chapters 17 and 18 will take place in the middle of the Tribulation. Events in part:

Two Witnesses Killed

Harlot Church of Rome Overthrown

Revived Roman Empire Destroyed

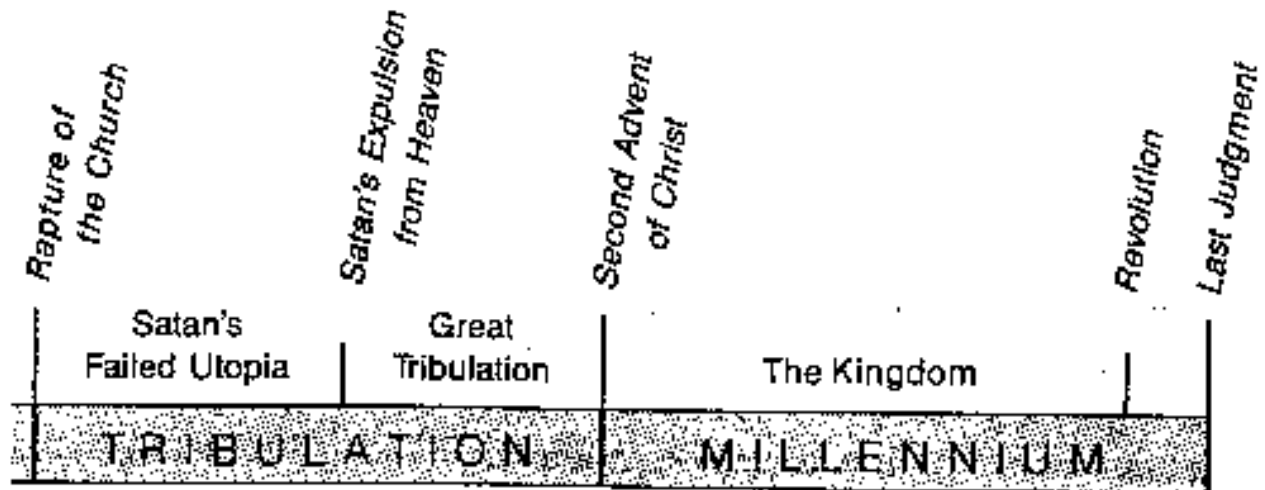
Treaty With Israel Destroyed

Antichrist Revived From Headwound

Babylon Is Destroyed

Intense Persecution Takes Place

Satan Is Cast Out of Heaven



6. The events of chapter 17 occur at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Though somewhat problematic, this revelation is given to John subsequent to the revelation of several of the seals, the trumpets and the vials.

7. It must be remembered that from John's point of view all of the events of the book of the Revelation were future, and it pleased God to reveal various aspects of future events in other than a chronological order.

8. In general, however, it is helpful to consider chapter 17 as dealing with Babylon as an ecclesiastical or spiritual entity and chapter 18 as dealing with Babylon as a political/commercial entity.

9. Now we are ready for the exegesis of Chapter Seventeen.

Chapter Seventeen

1. Chapter 17 describes the coming judgment of God on a religious system that has enslaved the human race in superstitious darkness for centuries.

2. Religion is the devil's trump card. Religion involves itself with what man can do for God vis-à-vis Christianity which concentrates on what God has done for man.

3. Chapters 17 and 18 of the book of the Revelation are dedicated to the description of the final destruction of Rome/Babylon as first the center of world religion and then Rome/Babylon as the center of international commerce and politics.

4. Neither chapter seventeen nor eighteen advance the narrative; these chapters are simply detailed descriptions of the demise of Rome first in its ecclesiastical form, then in its political form.

5. It is evident from these chapters that the events described, especially those found in chapter 17, precede by some considerable period the events represented in the seven vials.

6. It must be remembered that from John's point of view all of the events of the Book of the Revelation were future, and it pleased God to reveal various aspects of future events in other than a chronological order.

7. In general, however, it is helpful to consider chapter 17 as dealing with Babylon as an ecclesiastical or spiritual entity and chapter 18 as dealing with Babylon as a political/commercial entity.

8. It is also helpful in chapter 17 to distinguish the vision in verses 1 through 6 from what we find in verses 7 through 18.

9. Babylon then is taught in these two chapters from two different perspectives.

10. In chapter 18 Babylon seems to be some city along a great river, crowded with the ships of the merchants of the earth, details that are not present in chapter 17.

11. Wycliffe in his commentary provides a good concise introduction. I shall in part paraphrase:

11.1 "There are three groups to be identified in this opening paragraph: the beast, who has seven heads and ten horns; the harlot herself who rides the beast; and those referred to by many waters, later said to be "peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Rev 17:15 Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.

11.2 The ten horns, we are later informed, are ten kings (Rev 17:12), certainly contemporaneous; and the seven heads are seven mountains (Rev 17:9-10), which also represent kingdoms.

Rev 17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings ...

Rev 17:9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

Rev 17:10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11.3 We must never forget that every federation of kings in the Old Testament, and here, is always opposed to God and the people of God. The fourth divine institution recall is "NATIONALISM." Even in the Millennium there will be nations under the rule of Christ.

Dan 2:41 Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay.

Dan 2:42 As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle.

Dan 2:43 And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

Dan 2:44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

Psa 2:1 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

Psa 2:2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One.

Psa 2:3 "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters."

Psa 2:4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

Psa 2:5 Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

Psa 2:6 "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."

Psa 83:1 O God, do not keep silent; be not quiet, O God, be not still.

Psa 83:2 See how your enemies are astir, how your foes rear their heads.

Psa 83:3 With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish.

Psa 83:4 "Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more."

Psa 83:5 With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you--

Psa 83:6 the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites (south Arabia),

Psa 83:7 Gebal (northern Lebanon), Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre.

11.4 This woman, called THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS in Rev 17:2 and 5, commits fornication with the kings of the earth and for a while dominates them. In Rev 17:5 it would seem the nations of the world are enamored with her.

Rev 17:2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Rev 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

11.5 To whom or what does this woman refer? The majority of commentators, since the time of the Reformation, identify her with the papacy, as does Luther, Tyndale, Knox, Calvin, Alford, Elliott, Lange, and many others.

11.6 The Roman Catholic Church itself identifies this woman with Rome - but of course a reference to pagan Rome, now past.

11.7 She is definitely some vast spiritual system that persecutes the saints of God, betraying that to which she was called.

11.8 She enters into relations with the governments of this earth, and for a while rules them.

11.9 I think the closest we can come to an identification is to understand this harlot as symbolic of a vast spiritual power arising at the end of the age, which enters into a league with the world ...

11.10 Instead of being spiritually true, she is spiritually false, and thus exercises an evil influence in the name of religion.

11.11 The kings of the earth now, having one mind, federate, and give their authority unto this great enemy of God, the beast, and go out to make war against the Lamb. (Rev 17:13-14)

Rev 17:13 They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast.
Rev 17:14 They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings-- and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."

11.12 When this hour is come, the beast, with the power of the kingdoms of the earth, turns upon the harlot, this pseudo-spiritual force, and destroys her. (Rev 17:16)

Rev 17:16 The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire.

11.13 There is a very comforting statement in verse 17 - "God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind ... until the words of God should be accomplished."

Rev 17:17 For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled.

12. Since we have already covered the events taking place in the middle of the Tribulation: such events beginning what many expositors have called "The Great Tribulation," I think we would be best served to take a look at an expanded translation of Revelation Chapter Seventeen.

Expanded Translation

Rev 17:1 One of the angels who had delivered one of the seven vials came over to me and said, "Come over here, I want to show you the demise and punishment of the great prostitute," a metaphor for the Global Church of the Tribulation, "she is seen atop the many waters," a description of her close relationship with the international leaders of the world.

Rev 17:2 The angel went on to say, "With the Global Church the political leaders of planet earth have committed spiritual adultery; the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her many indiscretions." The people of the planet were overwhelmed with adoration for the Church of Rome and her false doctrines and her great wealth.

Rev 17:3 The angel then carried me away in the Spirit into a vast wilderness, where I saw a woman, sitting on a scarlet Beast representing the Satan indwelt Antichrist as the leader of the Revived Roman Empire; the Beast was covered with blasphemous names and he had seven heads representing the 7 hills of Rome and ten horns representing the 10 nations making up the European Federation. The world church and world government worked in close alliance. The woman was clearly depicted as the leader of the Global Church.

Rev 17:4 The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and she glittered with gold, precious stones and pearls; the church was awash in wealth. She held a golden cup in her hand filled with the filthy and nasty things she had done.

Rev 17:5 On her forehead a name has been written with a permanent inscription: **Mystery Babylon The Great the Mother of Prostitutes and of The Abominations of The Earth.**

Rev 17:6 I, John saw that the Global Church was drunk with the blood of the believers of the Tribulation, who held openly to their faith in Christ. When I saw her, I was absolutely appalled and I at first wondered what all this meant.

Rev 17:7 Then the angel said to me: "Why do you wonder as to whom she might be? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and the beast she rides; I will also explain the meaning of the seven heads and ten horns.

Rev 17:8 The beast which you saw is Satan, he once operated in his own world under the permissive will of God but during the millennial reign of Christ he will be chained in the abyss. Then at the end of the millennium he will be released for a short time and will come up out of the abyss only to fail once again. Then he will go to his destruction! The unbelievers called before the Great White Throne will be astonished when they see that Satan had been judged and placed forever in the lake of fire.

Rev 17:9 To understand this verse requires a spiritual understanding. The seven heads represent the seven hills of Rome where the Global church was located.

Rev 17:10 The seven kings are the original seven empires. Five of the seven empires, Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece have fallen, one of the Roman Empires is and the other has not yet come; but when that seventh empire, the original European Federation does come it will only last for a short time.

Rev 17:11 The beast who once was, and now is not, is Satan as the leader of the Revived Roman Empire, who by indwelling the Antichrist will call the shots but only under the permissive will of God. In God's timing both the evil empire together with its leaders will be destroyed.

Rev 17:12 John is told "The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, these ten will come onto the international scene just after the Rapture; they will rule their individual kingdoms along with the Antichrist who will serve as the leader of one of the ten."

Rev 17:13 They have one purpose and that is to hand over their power and authority to the beast who will then rule as the political leader of the Ten Nation Federation.

Rev 17:14 The confederation under the leadership of the Antichrist will make war against our Lord, but the Lamb of God will overcome them when he returns at His Second Advent; this because he is Lord of lords and King of kings-- and with Him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.

Rev 17:15 Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are the various nations of the world."

Rev 17:16 The Satan indwelt Antichrist, as the leader of the ten-nation federation will grow to hate the leader of the global church and her congregates. The Beast decides the church is no longer useful so he orders the execution of her leader and the destruction of her churches; her followers are required to worship only the Antichrist.

Rev 17:17 It was God the Father who motivated the Antichrist and the leaders of the federation to implement this plan; this includes his decision to require all unbelievers to worship him as god.

Rev 17:18 The woman shown to John was the leader of the Global church headquartered at Rome.

Summary Points

1. When believers are taken to heaven by the Rapture, religion does not disappear from the earth. Indeed, religion will flourish under this unfaithful prostitute for the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation.
2. The global church will likely build on the remnants of the professing Christian churches that existed before the Rapture.
3. Given the immanency of the Translation of the Church, the Mystery Prostitute is the Roman Catholic Church, as a central world church which will welcome the apostate denominations into their Global Ecumenical fold. This identification of the world church as the Roman Catholic church is clearly problematic given the fact we don't know the time of the Rapture.

4. Nominal Christians not raptured will remain to form the base of this "global church." Tribulation saints will oppose the organized global apostasy.

5. Since we, in this church lead a protected life, let me review how blasphemous has become much of organized religion. A recent survey showed about half of professing Christians believe God didn't create the world by fiat but rather he used evolution.

6. Many churches are ordaining women as pastors and deacons. The Presbyterians recently made the news because they had to lay off many workers due to "falling" revenues, they think caused by their decision to ordain homosexuals as pastors.

7. Baptist churches are at odds with one another because many do not agree the Bible is without error. Many Baptist churches are ordaining women both as evangelist, deacons and pastors.

8. Main line protestant churches like the Church of God, Assembly of God, Church of the Nazarene, Four Square, Community Church, the Christian Church, the Church of Christ, the Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Lutheran Church and the Mormon Church, all deny eternal security - the doctrine which teaches salvation comes from faith alone in Christ alone.

9. It is not difficult therefore to conceive of a time when all these apostate denominations will get together to make the world a better place under a giant and very wealthy ecclesiastical umbrella headquartered in Rome.

10. The harlotry of this system will extend to "many waters," a metaphor to teach that the Global Church will extend to many people in close alliance with the political leaders of the earth.

10.1 Given the Antichrist's early overtures toward Israel and his protection of her during the first three and one-half years, it is easy again to see how attractive such actions will be to many in the fundamentalist movement.

10.2 The Wall Street Journal had a front-page article about right wing fundamentalist Churches coming to the aid of the nation Israel due to the recent attacks on her. Many it said are holding Passover celebrations with Rabbis participating in order to show solidarity. The article went on to say many fundamentalist are now saying both they and Israel worship the same Holy God. The article further took note of the fact that money was being collected in right wing Churches to aid Israel's recovery from terrorist attacks.

10.3 The Antichrist's overtures and façade of protection of Israel would no doubt be well received today among many in Christianity.

11. In other words, the power of this church will be enhanced by political alliances while providing support and popular doctrines to counter the criticisms of the many small cadres of Bible believing Christians, the believers who remain true to the Word.

12. The inhabitants of the earth are further declared to have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. People will be delighted with the "do gooder" programs which are designed to show a special religious tolerance.

13. The picture of the woman as utterly evil signifies spiritual adultery, we find a picture of those who outwardly and religiously appear to be joined to the true God but in fact are apostate.

14. The symbolism of spiritual adultery is not ordinarily used of heathen nations who know not God, but always of people who outwardly carry the name of God while worshiping and serving false gods.

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